



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

La Porte County Family YMCA Michigan City Springfield Educare Handbook

La Porte County Family YMCA

La Porte Branch
901 Michigan Ave
La Porte IN, 46350
(219)325-9622

Michigan City Elston Branch
1202 Spring Street, Door K
Michigan City, IN 46360
(219)221-4055

Long Beach Branch
2501 Oriole Trail
Long Beach, IN 46360
(219)879-1395

Childcare & Learning Center
2510 Monroe St.
La Porte, IN 46350
(219)326-7646

Andrew Avenue Outdoor Center
1400 Andrew Avenue
La Porte, IN 46350
(219)325-9622



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing the Y's Educare Program for your child! We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment for children to learn, grow and develop social skills. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that your child is prepared for school success in kindergarten and beyond.

This handbook has been written to clearly communicate our Educare procedures, expectations and regulations. We look forward to partnering with your family as you become a part of our Y family.

Vision

The Y is committed to making early childhood education available to all families in our community, without regard to sex, race, color creed, religious beliefs, financial ability or a child's ability. We strive to provide a high quality educational experience that fosters each child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative development while promoting self-confidence and a love of learning

Mission

The Y's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Educational Philosophy and Curriculum

We believe children learn through play as they explore, manipulate materials, discover relationships and master new skills. Our Educare program uses the nationally recognized Creative Curriculum. Art, music, movement and dramatic play enhance creative expression. Social skills thrive in a caring environment that promotes a positive self-image and independence. Extensive use of language in the classroom provides the basis for early literacy skills.

Field Trips

Occasionally we expand our curriculum by scheduling in-house or out-of-house field trips. We will provide advance written notice of all trips away from the school site. Written permission is required for all outside field trips and some in-house field trips. Transportation for field trips is made available via the Y's mini-bus. Parents/guardians are always welcome to join us for field trips.

Program Goals

We strive to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing environment staffed by responsible, competent, caring adults who understand the unique needs of young children.
- Provide an environment that is full of interesting and age-appropriate activities, experiences and materials to further our students' curiosity and intellectual growth.
- Assist each child in becoming a responsible, self-directed and self-disciplined individual.
- Help develop social skills characterized by personal respect and positive social interaction.
- Offer a variety of learning opportunities to match each child's individual abilities and learning style.
- Partner with families to enhance our students' growth and development.

Admission Procedures

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to all children without regard to sex, race, color, creed, religious beliefs, financial ability or a child's ability. All enrollment forms must be completed prior to the child's first day in the Educare program. The following items are required:

- Completed Enrollment Application



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- A copy of the child's birth certificate
- Immunization records and completed physical form signed by the child's physician
- Registration fee to hold spot
- Tuition must be paid one week prior to start date.

We consider the first two weeks of enrollment to be a trial period. We reserve the right to request withdrawal of a student if during that period or at any time one or more of the following occurs:

- The child is not participating in or benefiting from the program.
- The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care for the child.
- The staff cannot provide adequate or safe care to other enrolled children due to the care needs of the child.

Of course, it is always your right to withdraw your child from the program if your family circumstances change. No notice is required for withdrawal.

Full-Time Enrollment

A child who is enrolled as a full-time student can use the facility from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Before/after school care is available for an additional charge. If your child rides the bus to and from school, pick-up and drop-off times are determined by the school corporation. The parent/guardian agrees to pay the Y Educare program the Full-Time Fee every week on Friday for the next week's care as long as the child is enrolled. There is no reduction in the fee if child does not attend class on a scheduled day. Families are not billed for school holidays.

Part-Time Enrollment

A child who is enrolled as a part-time student can use the facility from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Before/after school care is available for an additional charge. If your child rides the bus to or from school, pick-up and drop-off times are determined by the school corporation. The parent/guardian agrees to pay the Y Educare program the Part-Time Fee every week on Friday for the next week's care as long as the child is enrolled. There is no reduction in the fee if child does not attend class on a scheduled day. There is not a part-time class on two hour delay days. Families are not billed for school holidays.

Waiting List

When the Educare program reaches capacity for enrollment at specific sites, we will maintain a waiting list. To have a child's name placed on the waiting list, interested families must complete an Enrollment Application and pay a registration fee. Names are placed on the list in the order in which the applications are received. As space becomes available, we will notify individuals on the list. If you are not prepared for your child to enter the program when notified but want to reserve the space, a weekly tuition payment must be made until the child is able to attend.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Hours

The Y's Educare program operates Monday through Friday. Full-time hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Part-time hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Before School care is available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. After School care is available from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Before Your Child Arrives

To make sure your child is ready to focus on fun and learning, please keep the following program rules in mind as you prepare for drop-off each day.

- Please print your child's name clearly on personal belongings like jackets, hats, etc. This greatly reduces the possibility of misplaced items.
- **Please do not** allow your child to bring any toys, food, candy or money from home to Educare.



- Please dress children appropriately for messy activities and vigorous play.

Drop-off

For your children's safety, we have implemented the following drop-off/pick-up procedures:

- An adult age 18 or over must accompany your child into the school and deliver your child per the school's drop-off/pick-up procedure. Children may not enter or exit the building themselves unless they are riding the bus.
- Please park in areas designated by the school as parking areas. Please understand and accept that the Y is not responsible for damage to vehicles in the parking lot or tickets for illegal parking.
- If you drop your child off, please take them to the main entrance. The children will meet their teacher in front of the door, then walk together to the classroom.
- Please inform a staff member of any special requests or information for the day at drop-off.
- If you arrive later than 8:30 a.m. you will need to check in at the main office.
- All students who ride the bus to school will be met at the bus and escorted into the building.

Pick-Up

- For half-day students, school dismisses at 12:15 p.m. We will bring your child to the front entrance of the school. When you arrive at school, please pull up and park along the sidewalk that is in front of the main entrance. We will bring your child out to you. If it is a day with inclement weather, we will wait in the vestibule until cars arrive.
- For students riding the bus home, dismissal time is at 3:00 p.m. Students will be escorted to the bus at the end of the day. If you move or change your phone number, it is your responsibility to contact the MCAS Transportation Department ((219) 873-2127) and the school with your new contact information.
- If your child does not ride the 3:00 p.m. bus home, they must be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. If you pick up your child please go to the main entrance, press the button to be let in, and go directly to the classroom.

Release Procedure

The Y's policy is to release your child only to authorized adults ages 18 or older who are listed on a child's Enrollment Application. If someone else will be doing the pick-up, a parent/guardian must notify the teacher by a written note or verbally. When communicating this information over the phone, please provide your name, social security number, and the name of the individual picking up your child.

We also ask that you inform the individual doing the pick-up that we will request photo identification prior to releasing your child to them.

Child Custody

In special circumstances involving a custody issue, the parent/guardian will need to provide the legal documentation (court orders) outlining the rights of each individual with the completed application. These documents will be kept in your child's file. There are no exceptions to this policy. Court orders are the only documents that allow us to restrict access to a child and or his/her records.

Updated Emergency Information

In case of an emergency, it is essential that we have the most up-to-date information for our students at all times. This includes home, work, cell phone numbers and addresses for parents/guardians, medical information, emergency contact information, plans for early dismissal and changes in family situations. Forms to update your child's information are available from your child's teachers or from the Childcare and Learning Center.



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CLOSINGS

Holidays

The Educare sites will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Eve (Closing at Noon)
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve (Closing at Noon)
- Christmas Day

Snow Days

The Educare Program will follow all Michigan City Area School delays and closings. Please monitor emergency announcements on one the local stations listed below, on the Y's Facebook page, or on the school website at www.lpcsc.k12.in.us. If there is a two-hour delay, there will be no Educare. If there is an early dismissal, please make arrangements for early pick-up of your child.

<u>Television</u>	<u>Radio</u>	
Channel 22 WSBT	94.3 FM	96.7 FM
Channel 16 WNDU	99.0 FM	101.5 FM

Please note there is no reduction in tuition for snow days, family holidays, vacations or children's absences for other reasons.

Food and Drink

Please do not send children to Educare with outside food and drink. When food is provided for a special event, it must store bought and prepackaged. Please remember that our classrooms are peanut-free.

Our Educare program will not serve food items prepared in a home kitchen at any time, except with a physician's written order for a particular child's special diet.

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Full-Time - \$120.00 per week (plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee)

Part-Time - \$85.00 per week (plus \$50 non-refundable registration fee)

Before care - \$25.00 extra per week

After care - \$25.00 extra per week

Financial assistance is available through the Y's scholarship fund to qualifying families. Please ask for an application at the Member Services desk of any Y branch.

Registration Fees

This program has a non-refundable \$50.00 per child registration fee. Before your child can start attending Educare, the registration fee and first week's tuition is due in full.

Payment Policy

Fees for the upcoming week for both Full-Time and Part-Time enrollments are due the Friday before by 5:30 p.m. Payments can be made by cash, check, credit card, or money order.



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Please write the following information on your check or money order:

- Child's first and last name
- Reason for the payment (weekly fee, late fee, or other)
- Week of service for which the payment is being made
- Status of the child (Full-Time or Part-Time)

Past Due Accounts

Past due accounts are assessed a \$10 per child late fee for each week past due. Families whose fees are past due in excess of one week can be dropped from the program and all Y programs for non-payment.

Late Pick Up

A \$1.00 per minute, per child, late fee is imposed for all children picked up after class time. Late fees are due immediately.

Returned Check Fee

If a check is returned unpaid, it will be collected electronically and you will be assessed a minimum fee of \$25.00. The check issuer is responsible for all other collection costs. After the first NSF check, only money orders, or credit cards will be accepted as payment.

STAFF AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Staff

We pride ourselves on our experienced, dedicated early childhood education team. Each classroom has a Lead Teacher who has completed a Child Development Associates Degree or has a degree in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education. Classroom Assistants work with the Lead Teacher to provide care and carry out the curriculum. Every staff member is checked thoroughly including reference checks, background screens and tuberculosis screenings. All receive training in CPR, First Aid, Universal Precautions/Blood Borne Pathogens and numerous other safety topics.

Open Door Policy

Our role is to support families and nurture children's growth and development in a loving, caring environment. We encourage and welcome parents/guardians to be active participants in our program. Please talk to your child's teacher about how you can become more involved in our classroom activities.

A strong partnership built on honest communication will lead to the best possible care for your child. Please talk to our staff about any concerns, issues or needs you or your child may have.

Parent /Teacher Conferences

The Educare program will follow the same schedule as MCAS in regards to parent/teacher conferences. If at any time you have any concerns regarding the Educare Program, the classroom activities, policies or your child, the directors and/or teachers are always willing to meet with parents to discuss these concerns.



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ISTAR-KR Assessments

Through a cooperative agreement with the Indiana Department of Education, our early childhood education staff has been trained on the Indiana Standards Tool for Assessment Reporting – Kindergarten results (ISTAR-KR). With your permission, children in our Educare program will be assessed using this tool. These assessments help us evaluate our teaching and ensure your child is learning the skills necessary to be prepared for kindergarten.

Volunteers

The Y welcomes the community to support our programs through volunteer services. All volunteers must complete applications, undergo background checks and attend trainings where required. Volunteers supplement classroom activities and do not take the place of paid staff.

Conflict Resolution

Parents/guardians should direct any questions or concerns to the Lead Teacher. If concerns still exist, these should be addressed to the Childcare and Learning Center Director. The Director will attempt to resolve the concern through a meeting with all parties involved. If this step does not resolve the issue, parents/guardians may contact the Y's Executive Director in writing.

ILLNESS POLICY

Illness and Children

Children who are ill may not attend Educare. If your child does not seem healthy or is exhibiting uncommon symptoms, please do not bring them to school.

Children will be checked upon arrival and observed through the day for signs of communicable disease. Staff will not admit children who are ill upon arrival. Any child who becomes ill will be isolated and the parent/guardian will be contacted. It is expected that the child will be picked up within one hour of being contacted.

Parents/guardians will be called when the following developing symptoms are present:

- Cold Sores/Herpes
- Diarrhea-3 loose bowel movements
- Fever 100.5 or above
- Inflammation of the eye
- Vomiting
- Unexplained Rash

Children should not return to Educare until they have been treated and are symptom-free for 24 hours.

Contagious Disease Policy

If the child has a confirmed case of a contagious disease, he or she must be kept at home and the condition must be reported to the staff immediately. Some conditions that the parent/guardian must report to Educare are:

- Strep Throat
- Pink Eye
- Pin Worms
- Viral Infection
- Measles
- Mumps
- Ringworm
- Chicken Pox
- Scarlet Fever
- Diarrhea
- Impetigo
- Hand Foot Mouth Disease (HFMD Coxsackie A)
- Herpes Simplex 1 (Cold Sores)
- Head Lice
- RSV
- Rotovirus



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The conditions listed above are noted as “highly contagious” (the list above does not include all contagious diseases; refer to the Center for Disease Control CDC for current list). Children with confirmed cases of “highly contagious” illnesses will not be allowed to return to Educare until the child has been treated and has been symptom free for over 24 hours, or a doctor’s note is provided stating they are no longer contagious.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & FIRST-AID ADMINISTRATION

Accident/Incident and Emergency Notification

The health and safety of the children entrusted to us is our top priority. For minor incidents, our staff will complete an “Accident/Incident Report” to be sent home with your child. A copy will also be retained in your child’s file.

Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of any accident or incident that is of immediate concern or if first aid treatment is required. If a situation requires advanced medical treatment, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility by emergency staff. We will send a staff person with the child along with signed medical authorization forms. The medical authorization required for this program allows Y staff to take necessary measures in the absence of the parent/guardian during an emergency.

Please understand that the La Porte County Family YMCA is not responsible for any loss or injury during programs or activities. The Y **does not provide liability insurance**. All families, participants and guests must have personal insurance coverage. In the case of a claim, the participant’s or parent/guardian’s (in the case of a minor) insurance is the primary carrier and the Y’s insurance will be the secondary carrier. In order to participate in our programs, you must agree that any claim must go through your own insurance before the Y’s insurance will cover any losses or claims. You must also agree to hold the Y and its staff and/or volunteers harmless for any injury or condition that may result from participating in any Y activity or program.

Administration of Medications

The State Licensing Standards require that all medication be in their original containers and labeled with the child’s name. A medical permission form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian with the following information to enable staff to administer the medicine. **Parents/guardians should try to plan to administer as many doses of medication as possible at home, including the first dose of the day.** All medicine must be taken home daily. The medicine request must include the following information:

- Child’s name
- Name of medicine
- Doctor’s name
- Number of days the medicine will be administered
- Amount to be administered
- Time to be administered

Physician’s permission forms or other instructions, such as a nutritional supplement, must be on file for each child for whom the instruction is written. These forms must be renewed annually.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Child Abuse Policy

The Y has developed a policy on Child Abuse Prevention and Detection. The Educare staff is trained in following this policy, which includes the following components:

- Y staff and volunteers will not discipline children by use of verbal or physical punishment or denying the necessities of care, such as food or shelter.



- Parents/guardians are welcome to visit any time, no appointment necessary.
- Parents/guardians will be informed about their children's program participation.
- Staff are trained to be alert to the physical and emotional state of children and are mandated reporters.
- When signs of injury or suspected abuse are detected, the Childcare and Learning Center Director will be notified immediately and proper Y procedures will be followed.
- Y staff may not release a child to anyone unless the procedures outlined under "Release Procedure," above, are followed.
- Reference checks on all prospective Y employees or volunteers will be conducted, documented, and filed prior to employment or volunteer work assignment.
- All staff will have training on the detection and prevention of child abuse.
- Staff are never to leave children unsupervised.
- Staff are encouraged to position themselves where they are never in a private area or alone with just one child.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Television Policy

Television use in the classroom shall meet the following guidelines:

- All programs must be for educational purposes only and be rated "G" and incorporated into the lesson plan.
- All programs must be age-appropriate
- Teachers will not require children to watch or sit in front of a television and will offer other activities.
- Teachers will maintain required room lighting.
- **Students may not bring videos or CDs from home to our classroom.**

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is common for young children. It usually lasts no longer than two weeks when parents/guardians and staff are working together to comfort and reassure the child. Once your child becomes familiar with the routine, the anxiety will lessen.

Behavior Policy

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all children. Our guidelines require that each child be able to function appropriately within the classroom. Guiding the behavior of children, helping them develop core of values, and building healthy personalities are important tasks that our staff takes seriously. We believe children learn self-control for behaving appropriately and responsibly when adults treat them with dignity and use positive techniques such as:

- Guiding children by setting clear, consistent, and fair limits for classroom behavior.
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Making eye contact and listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
- Guiding children to resolve their own conflicts as needed.
- Using effective praise that is immediate, sincere, and specific.
- Establish rules that will help children understand what they can and cannot do.

We understand that children will, at times, show aggressive behaviors such as biting, scratching, hitting, pushing, etc. Children will assert their independence in ways that seem defiant. Our staff is knowledgeable in child development



and is aware of what is average and appropriate behavior for the preschool age group. If we begin to see a pattern of misbehavior, we will:

- Work with the child's parents/guardians to set up a behavior management plan to target the need of the individual child in order to help him/her function within our guidelines.
- Communicate verbally and in written form of the child's progress.
- If little or no progress is seen within an appropriate amount of time, we will make parents/guardians aware of support programs outside of our classroom that would meet the needs of the child. Participation in some type of intervention will be required at this point. Note: We reserve the right to enforce a period of suspension for children with a pattern of behavior that does not fall within our guidelines.
- If the parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to enroll the child in a support program, participation in our program will be terminated at the Director's discretion.
- Expulsion from the program will be the last resort.

Outdoor Play

Young children need fresh air, a change of scenery and freedom to explore freely and be as loud as they like. They especially need daily opportunities for vigorous play to better focus and concentrate on the indoor learning opportunities. The State of Indiana requires the children to be outside if the temperature is 25 degrees or warmer (including wind chill) for a minimum of 10 minutes two times a day. Our Educare program follows this regulation. Children should come to Educare dressed in play clothes to freely participate. Please dress your child accordingly.

- Winter: Coats, hat, mittens, snow boots.
- Spring/Fall: Light jacket, cap

If your child is too sick to go outside, he/she is too sick to be at school. **A physician's statement is required for children who are not permitted to go outside if the request is for more than three days.**

Lost and Found

Sending your child's personal items to the classroom labeled helps us make sure they get home to you. If you notice an item is missing, please immediately give a full description of the item to your child's teacher and a search will be conducted throughout the classroom, if necessary. Please understand and accept that the Y is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Donations

We are always appreciative of donations of dress-up clothes, books and like-new toys at any time.